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THE LADDER

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EMOTIONS THAT DESTROY YOU HEALTH AND PERSONALITY

By Alice LaVere, Consulting Psychologist, Personal Adjustment Bureau, 323 Geary St., San Francisco

You have seen many times the changes that sudden fear will make instantaneously in a person's face. It is not a pretty sight. You know how you feel when you are frightened. The changes that this upset condition bring about are both physiological and psychological.

Persons who live under these emotions continually actually effect changes in their chemistry that are among the causes of functional illnesses. Fear, worry and doubt are among the most destructive emotions that we experience. These emotions are at the root of such chronic conditions as unhappiness, nervousness, temper tantrums, and lack of energy. These same emotions influence the flow of the endocrine gland system and change the delicate balance that means good health and clear thinking.

When one permits such destructive emotions to rule or influence most of his living, the chances for health and happiness are reduced to practically nothing. Space will not permit the complete discussion of the multitudinous negative effects of fear upon the human personality. However, you may be sure that when you observe the following reactions and characteristics, the person exhibiting them is living under a repressed fear thought. The most common of the repressed fear thought reactions are: revenge, jealousy, resentment, doubt, hate, stubbornness, mental cowardice, procrastination and alibi.

No one likes to admit to these negative and destructive activities, and it is usual for each of us to "cover-up" and camouflage our motives. The extra effort to effect this camouflage is one of the causes of tension. Tension, fear, doubt and worry are present in most cases of heart failure, stroke, peptic ulcers and other functional illnesses.

Because of the fear thoughts we harbor and the tension that is the natural result of fear, many of our plans and ambitions go wrong and we are forced to admit failure. At this stage the human personality has to add another destructive force to the list, FRUSTRATION.

Here you have the unholy trio, FEAR, TENSION and FRUSTRATION.

Each one is enough to cause a person to miss the mark he has set for himself. With all three at work it is little wonder that we live in a world full of the "almost-well" and the "half-way-successful."

Fortunately there is a way to rid oneself of the emotional reaction to such impressions. And at the same time to build into the automatic reaction pattern of the individual the desired mental habit patterns. Let us say that you are the victim of a failure complex. So far in your life everything that has been important to you has not turned out well. You are being conditioned to expect that it will always be so. When something new turns up you say to yourself: "Well, it almost worked for me last time, maybe it will work this time," and you start the same old routine that has almost worked for you for years. Naturally you are going to have the same result this time because you started out with the failure complex.

How when it does fail, you automatically rationalize and invent excuses for the failure. All of these excuses are real to you. And because they are real, no other idea will come to you to stop you from making the same old mistake over and over again.

No one likes to discuss his failures. This makes it necessary to bury them deep in the subconscious. The constant planting of all failure patterns into the subconscious fills the individual with failure reaction patterns.

Success seems to most of us in a way that looks phenomenal to the casual observer. Yet each time we analyze the component parts of success, it is usually gained by following the rules.

As long as we consider ourselves intelligent, we admit that we are capable and willing to learn better ways to accomplish our purposes. Now is the time to take stock of our personal inventory and to apply our intelligence to the purpose of making ourselves more productive and to realize the fruits of our labor.

By protecting ourselves through a thorough understanding of our minds and bodies, we are able to prolong our best years, physically and mentally.

Each individual should learn to rid his mind of the fear thoughts that are tied up inside. It is these thoughts and the emotional results of these thoughts that are influential to a marked degree in cases of premature aging, personality breakdown and unsatisfactory relationships.

It is up to you to decide whether you are going to rule your emotions or let your emotions rule you.

ALICE LAVERE, author of the preceding article, will be the speaker at the fourth of our public discussion meetings on FEAR, as related to the Lesbian. Be sure to attend this stimulating and informative lecture -- Tuesday, January 22 at 465 Geary St., Studio 51 [fifth floor] at 8:15 p.m.

RAISING CHILDREN IN A DEVIANT RELATIONSHIP

Small group discussions for women interested in the problems encountered in raising children in a deviant relationship will be sponsored by the Daughters of Bilitis in the San Francisco Bay Area. Several professional leaders in the nursery school and parent-education field have offered to participate as discussion moderators and lend assistance based on their knowledge and experience.

Certainly all mothers and any other women interested in this subject should contact the Daughters of Bilitis, P. O. Box 2183, San Francisco 26, California. Discussions will be set up in the very near future.

For those out of town who have expressed interest, THE LADDER will print a series of articles based on these discussions.

Suggestions for other topics of discussion will be welcome.

On pages 3 and 4 of the December issue of THE LADDER, a serious mis-print occurred. Item 13 of the list of rules to follow in case of arrest should read as follows:

"If you are questioned by any law enforcement officer, including the FBI, remember that you are NOT required to answer any questions concerning yourself or others. (5th Amendment, U. S. Constitution.)

THIRD DISCUSSION ON FEAR

"Women have more "fear" problems than men, in general, due to the heritage from the Victorian era which is still with us," declared Basil Vaerlen, San Francisco psychotherapist at the December discussion meeting of the Daughters of Bilitis.

He pointed out that anxiety, not fear, is the major problem and that we must solve the semantic aspect of fear before the subject can be discussed intelligently, since the word is so bogged down with bad connotations and mis-connotations.

Anxiety, he said, is fright of the unknown as opposed to fear which comes in anticipation of a known danger.

Unfortunately, our culture is built around a sub-stratum of guilt which runs through all the Christian-Judaic religions and holds that all people are born with original sin and that all mistakes must be followed by punishment.

Mr. Vaerlen pointed out that most anxieties or fears are tied in with guilt. "An error is a mistake corrected by appraising it intelligently and deciding not to make the same mistake; but in our culture we are chastised for our first mistakes and this conditioning carries through our entire lives."

"Most people do not re-evaluate their training when they reach the age of reason," he declared. "At 14 or 15, people should sit down and decide what they think, not what they have been told to think"

"We cannot blame mother and father for our aberrations," he continued. "They are doing the best they knew how." Mr. Vaerlen added that most parents of this generation are still hampered by Victorian era beliefs and restrictions.

Most of the difficulty encountered by homophiles and heterophiles alike in later years stems from actions in the first three or four years of life....actions long since forgotten. A lot of this boils down to a sense of rejection fostered by such statements as "If you do that sort of thing, Mother won't love you."

Essentially, he pointed out, we are all looking for a mother or father who will forgive all....in other words, approval.

In what proved the most provocative comment of the evening Mr. Vaerlen stated his belief that the true biological function of the female is to have children, and that by denying themselves this function the Lesbian is unfulfilled, and is hampering her health and happiness.

"The basic problem in evaluating your personal problems," he said, "is to find out why you are shying away from sexual relations with men. In other words, the problem is not why you like women, but why you don't like men."

He pointed out that among women there is a greater tendency to have heterosexual relations before homosexual, thereby giving them a better basis on which to predicate their choice of love object. This also places them in a better position to evaluate where their feelings came from.

"The hardest job for the aberrated person is to go into her personal feelings," he said, "because then the hidden fears crop up. The first step in personal evaluation is to find out if you have fears or anxieties. Look at your problems objectively, without bringing in emotional reactions, and trace back to the origins of your fears to see what they are and if you have to have them.

"It should be nobody's business but yours if you are autophile, homophile, heterophile of nophile," he declared. "The difference is to you and you are here only for growth and experience. Get rid of your fears and you won't care who thinks what, but you won't flaunt your way of life in the face of society."

Grist for future meetings was brought up at the panel discussion held in November. Types of fears brought up were related to neighbors, losing job, parents, the law, group activity, personal relationships and blackmail. It was pointed out by one member that it all boils down to FEAR OF DISCOVERY.

THE LADDER received nationwide publicity last month when THE INDEPENDENT, monthly newspaper published in New York, printed an article telling of our magazine. The story explained the purpose of the Daughters of Bilitis, briefly and ended with the following thought:

"With many subjects being more and more confined in discussion, the case for and against the sex variant was contradicting the trend: was being more frequently and more frankly written about."

THE INDEPENDENT contains facts and significant opinion about many controversial subjects in modern America. It is available on many newsstands or by subscription at the rate of $3 for 12 issues. Single copies are 25c by mail. Address is 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.

ANN FERGUSON IS DEAD!

I confess. I killed Ann Ferguson. Premeditatedly and with malice aforethought. We ran an article in the November issue of THE LADDER entitled "Your Name is Safe." Ann Ferguson wrote that article. Her words were true, her conclusions logical and documented -- yet she was not practising what she preached.

Somehow it didn't seem right.

She spent some time considering the situation. Then came to a conclusion. At the December public discussion meeting of the Daughters of Bilitis we got up -- Ann Ferguson and I -- and did away with Ann. Now there is only Phyllis Lyon.

Seriously, my pseudonym was taken in the first place without much thought. Somehow, it seemed the thing to do. But all it did was create problems. If you're going to write under a pseudonym then you should go by that name in personal contacts. But everybody connected with the Daughters of Bilitis already knew me as Phyllis and the attempts to call me Ann confused everyone, including me.

I'm sure that I am not placing myself in any jeopardy by using my own name -- and I'm only simplifying matters and practising what I preach.

THE LADDER staff is preparing a quarterly publication which includes the first three issues of THE LADDER. This will be ready in the very near future. All persons who have subscribed recently and who stated that they wanted the subscription to start with Volume I, Number I, will receive this quarterly.

Others who would like to have a copy may address their requests to Daughters of Bilitis, P. O. Box 2183, San Francisco, Calif., enclosing 50c for each copy desired.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, Jan.22 - Fourth in a series of public discussions on fear as related to the Lesbian. Alice LaVere, consulting psychologist, will speak on "Fear and Human Emotions." Meeting place is 465 Geary St., Studio 51 (fifth floor) at 8:15 P.M. (see page 3)

Saturday and Sunday, Jan 25-27 - ONE Midwinter Institute at Los Angeles, Calif. (see page 12)

Tuesday, Feb. 12 - Monthly business meeting at 1030-B Steiner St., 8 p.m. The group welcomes prospective members who wish to attend.

Saturday, Feb. 16 - Valentine's party at 651 Duncan St., 8:30 p.m. $1.50 donation per person. Please phone for reservations by Friday, Feb. 15. (VA 4-2790)

Tuesday, Feb. 26 - Fifth in series on Fear, relating to employment and the Lesbian, 465 Geary St., Studio 51, 8:15 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We received some letters wherein the writers wonder about the type of people we have in this organization. We reprint here a part of such a letter:

"...I am glad the response to your first issue turned out so well. I can imagine how it was received, by judging from the pieces I've heard about from those who received it here. Unfortunately, all feeling it is a good cause, but each individual feels she has too much at stake to risk identity with such a movement. .....But though objections were voiced, nevertheless, the mag was well received....the point was brought up -- who would participate in a movement of this type, rather, what type of kids.....anyone who had anything to risk would shy away --only the notorious would concern themselves as a means of exhibition -- the "better" kids one rarely sees as they keep to themselves and don't frequent the drinking places, etc.,.....

"This much I know, there is a need, a very strong need. But, (there's that word again) what can one do about it in the face of prejudice, narrow-mindedness, head in the sand attitude and just plain chicken heartedness?"

T.F., Seattle, Wn.

OUR ANSWER is that we have college students, saleswomen, dental technicians, photographers, stenographers, teachers, traffic management people, etc. Some are home owners, some are saving for their future home, some are just living.

We aren't "bar-hoppers," but people with steady jobs, most of them good positions and we all have faith that one day we will not be looked down upon if discovered, but that people will think that we are the same as they with only the personal difference of our sexual preference.

We have said before, someone had to start this ball rolling and so here we are. At the moment we are all what might be termed "white-collar" workers, but we want all kinds -- those who want help and those who wish to help.

We are just honest, sincere people maintaining our own place in society and we want to help others do the same. Will you help, too?

D.C.

NOTES ON A BOOK AND ITS REVIEW

TIME Magazine in its December 10 issue reviewed a book called HOMOSEXUALITY: A DISEASE OR WAY OF LIFE? by Edmund Bergler, a Manhattan Psychoanalyst.

This has caused an enormous amount of comment from its readers and reviews have subsequently appeared in ONE and MATTACHINE NEWS LETTER.

The gist of Mr. Bergler's writings seems to be that homosexuality is neither "a biologically determined destiny nor incomprehensible ill luck." He feels that the pattern

of homosexuality develops from infantile frustrations, pleasure in displeasure and an to psychic masochism."

"The full grown homosexual," says Dr. Bergler, "wallows in self pity and sentimentally provokes hostility to secure himself more opportunities for self pity; he exploits injustices ... sometimes real, often fancied; he is full of defensive malice and flippancy, excusing his depression and guilt with extreme accusation and supercilliousness. He refuses to acknowledge accepted standards even in consensual matters, assuming that homosexuals have a right to and moral arrogance at incomprehension for their "suffering."

We cannot re-print the entire review here as space does not permit. However, if you are curious about the book, we do not suggest your buying it. Try to borrow it,...and read the full review in TIME.

One of our contributors has asked, "are YOU full of self-pity, sentimentally provoking hostility, and injustice gatherer, full of defensive malice and flippancy? Do YOU sever your depression and guilt with extreme accusation and supercilliousness? Do YOU refuse to acknowledge accepted standards? Are YOU generally unreliable?" We think these are good questions. Dr. Bergler says that all these traits are psychopathic and that ALL homosexuals possess them, regardless of their particular level of intelligence, culture, background or education.

If you have answered these questions to yourself and agree with Dr. Bergler, we'd like to know. Perhaps we are going on a useless mission. We don't think many of us can answer in the affirmative. We don't think Dr. Bergler's ideas are acceptable to us or to a vast majority of people in the psychiatric field.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We received a letter this week that has left us slightly in a quandry. It came from Germany and is written in German. Our staff has been able to work up a rather literal translation with indicates that the correspondent learned of us through the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University. Enclosed was a small magazine called "Aphrodite" which appears to be by and about lesbians and our correspondent is the editor. We hope to be able to give further information on this in our next issue.

"THE LADDER is very good, the second issue was better than the first....progress is on the way. Unfortunately all of us far away readers can't be there to participate in your activities.

"I'd especially like to be present when the discussions on the problems of the Homosexual are presented. This has always been of interest to me because it is difficult for me to believe that it is as great as i- the general conception....no greater than the problems of the heterosexuals.... very different, perhaps, but none the greater.

"Frankly I don't relish the idea that I'm a poor, sick soul floundering around in confusion. Rather I prefer to think that I'm a healthy citizen who contributes to the welfare of the community. Naturally we can't expect the whole world to love and understand, they don't love and understand all of anything....But we dare it to.

"If the homosexual who earnestly tries puts forth an effort to live in a society as a decent citizen, living up to the standards that she or he expects from others, then it seems as if their acceptance comes about naturally.

"So, it appears more like a personal problem. We have to face the fact that some of our homosexual kin do get out of line, not to mention the lack of morals and ideals, taking the line of least resistance, etc. These actions of one individual cast a shadow on the lot of any minority group... whether it be homosexuals, Jews, Negroes, or other minority groups.

"Maybe teaching a little sociology would go a long way with this 'problem'."

A.T., Seattle, Wash.

"....If you can think of more persons who would benefit by receiving THE LADDER I would appreciate learning of them. If not, then I will suggest that the money I send be used for subscriptions for the sociology departments of the University of Washington and the University of Utah. Perhaps, if enough

members donated, we could send out subscriptions to all the leading university sociology and/or psychology departments. The more people who can be reached, the sooner a reorientation and reconditioning will begin.

J.G., Salt Lake City, Utah

I read in Danton Walker's column that J. Arthur Rank had writers doing the screen play for the film, "The Well of Loneliness" by Radclyffe Hall. D. W. is a Broadway columnist for the Daily News.

"Raising children in a deviant relationship is an untouched subject....never heard of it and would like to know more about it...."

H. G., New York, N.Y.

ONE, Incorporated
MIDWINTER INSTITUTE

January 25-27 at Los Angeles, Calif.

THEME: The Homosexual Answers his Critics.

Registration Fees: $3.50 per person or 2 for $5.00
Sunday afternoon Tea, $1.00 per person. Banquet, $2.50 per person. For all three, $5.00 per person.

A delegation from the Daughters of Bilitis will attend this Institute and meet with members in the Los Angeles Ar a.

Others interested in attending may write to

ONE, Incorporated
232 So. Hill Street
Los Angeles 12, Calif.

State what reservations will be required, enclose check and state over signature that you are 21 or older.

MEMBERSHIP in THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS may be either a voting, or associate membership.

VOTING MEMBERSHIP: $5.00 initiation fee and $1.00 monthly dues. THE LADDER is sent FREE.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: $2.50 initiation fee and .50 monthly dues. THE LADDER is sent FREE. Since most people having this membership are not residents of the area in which meetings and activities are held, copies of business meeting minutes are also mailed to these members.

THE LADDER: A monthly publication by The Daughters of Bilitis, mailed by first class mail in a plain sealed envelope for $1.00 per year.

CONTRIBUTIONS are gratefully accepted from anyone who wishes to assist us in our work. We are a non-profit organization working entirely on donated labor. Our fees are not of such amounts as to allow for such expansion of the publication. While men may not become members of The Daughters Of Bilitis, many have expressed interest in our efforts and our publication and have made contribution to further our work. Of course, anyone over 21 years of age may subscribe to THE LADDER.

TO BECOME A MEMBER: Write to The Daughters of Bilitis, P.O.Box 2183, San Francisco, Calif. requesting an application.

TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE LADDER: Send $1 for one year enclosing the coupon below or facsimile.

SEND THE LADDER TO: _____

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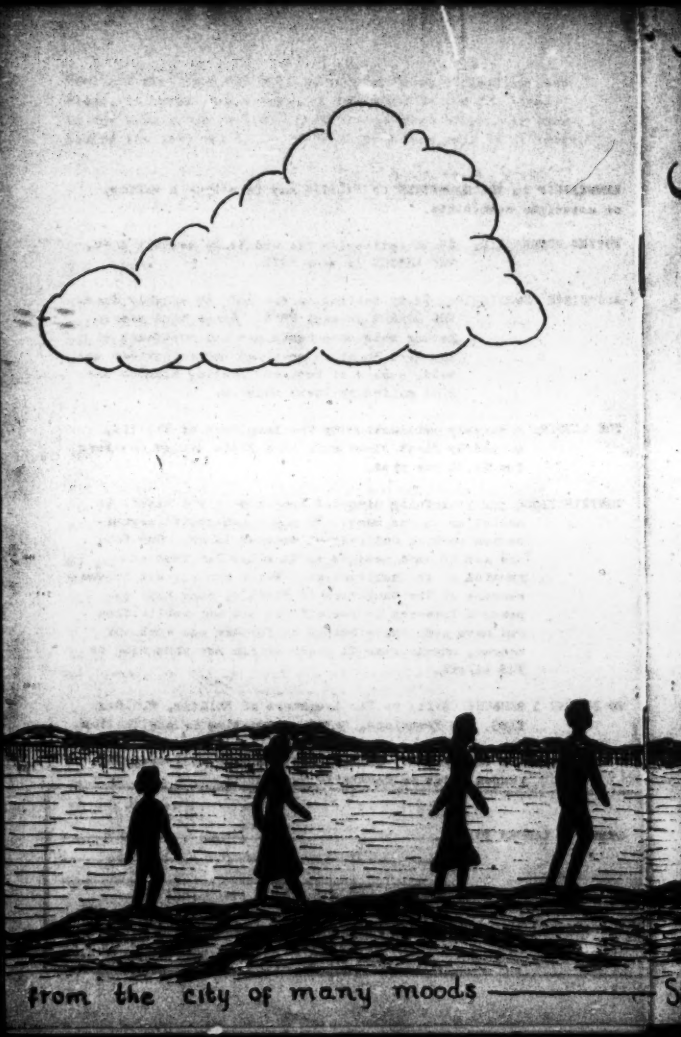
I enclose_____ I am 21 years of age or older.

SIGNED _____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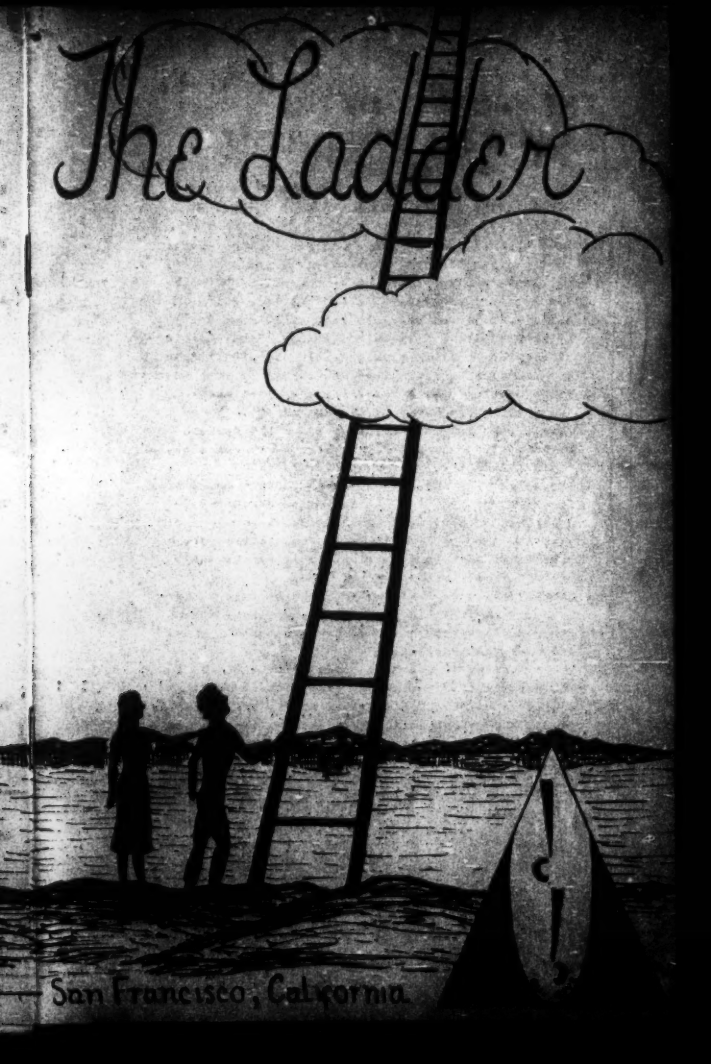
The Ladder
San Francisco, California

THE PURPOSE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications -- this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a code of behaviour and dress acceptable to society.
2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous conceptions, taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.
3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychology, sociology and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.
4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.